

# Haldeman's Musings

## Mission, Kan.

Former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman speculates that the Central Intelligence Agency may have helped engineer the Watergate scandal to destroy Richard Nixon.

"The agency had the capacity and perhaps, unknown to me, the motivation," Haldeman said in the fourth of a series of five syndicated newspaper articles co-written with columnist Joseph Scott.

Haldeman said he never understood why Alexander Butterfield, the aide who revealed the existence of the White House tapes to the Senate Watergate Committee, wanted to join the White House staff.

"Alex originally approached the White House on his own initiative — not because I recruited him," Haldeman wrote. "He was soon to become an Air Force general. I have never understood why he insisted, against my advice, on dropping his commission. Or why he suddenly wanted to be part of the Nixon team.

"In view of his subsequent role, these actions seem even more curious today. Was Butterfield a CIA agent? Maybe. I just don't know.

"In retrospect, I'm ambivalent as to whether the agency was out to get Nixon. I don't dismiss it as an impossibility. I do believe there are a number of unanswered questions about the break-in at the Watergate."

Haldeman also discussed the relationships among top White House aides who became involved in Watergate. Among his points:

- Haldeman violated one of his own cardinal rules — "don't assume" — in recruiting John Dean for the White House, because he assumed Dean had been cleared by the FBI while he was working at the Justice Department.

"If I had seen Dean's FBI dossier it would have barred him from the White House. Allegations about a conflict-of-interest charge, however slight, involving his prior affiliation with a law firm would have been enough to concern me

about the smoke, whether or not there was any fire."

- Charles Colson "was always a problem. Frankly, I didn't like him, nor did many others. His tough, abrasive manner earned him a bad reputation with all the staff, with perhaps the exception of Dean. Colson played to Nixon's darker, less appealing side."

- "With the President, John Mitchell enjoyed a peer relationship, absolutely unique in the Nixon White House."

- John Ehrlichman's association with Nixon "was often slightly strained and uncomfortable in a mutual way. Analytical and self-assured, Ehrlichman disagreed with the President without fear, frequently, and in a blunt, direct manner. He expressed concerns about Nixon's lifestyle, specifically in the area of drinking."

- Henry Kissinger told Haldeman that if Nixon permitted Haldeman to resign, Kissinger would resign immediately.

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